

REMARKS

The Examiner's action dated August 1, 2003, has been received and its contents carefully noted.

The rejection presented in section 1.1 of the action, based on Hirata in view of Ikegami, is respectfully traversed for the reason that each of the rejected claims defines subject matter that is not disclosed in or suggested by any reasonable combination of the teachings of the applied references.

The invention defined in claim 1 is directed to a local area network within a building, the network being composed of at least one wired segment and at least one non-wired segment. The wired segment includes an electrically-conducting line within the building, at least two outlets, each operative for coupling to the electrically-conducting line, and a wired modem coupled to the electrically-conducting line. The non-wired segment includes a non-wired modem and at least one of the outlets of the wired segment couples the wired segment to the non-wired segment.

Thus, in the arrangement defined in claim 1 of the present application, both the wired modem and the non-wired modem are coupled to the electrically-conducting line since the non-wired modem is part of the non-wired segment and one

of the outlets couples the wired segment to the non-wired segment.

Hirata discloses a communication system that can be considered to include at least one electrically-conducting line and at least one wired modem connected to the electrically-conducting line, but this reference does not contain any disclosure of non-wired modems. The secondary reference, Ikegami, is relied upon for its disclosure of a non-wired modem. It is agreed that Ikegami discloses such a component. However, contrary to the assertion presented in the action, there is no disclosure in this reference of coupling a non-wired modem to a wired segment of a local area network that includes an electrically-conducting line.

Contrary to the assertion presented in the action, element 103 shown in figure 4 of Ikegami is not a wired LAN network, but is only a wired-LAN controller. The specification of this reference is quite clear in its disclosure that controller 103 employs an access control protocol "as usually employed in wired floor LANs." (col. 3, lines 48-49). This is the only disclosed relation between controller 103 and wired LANs.

Rather, the invention disclosed in this ~~reference~~ is specifically directed to a wireless-LAN terminal, and only a

wireless-LAN terminal, that communicates with other terminals only via wireless links.

[ There is absolutely no disclosure in this reference of connecting a wireless modem to a wired segment of a LAN or, it follows, of connecting a non-wired modem to a wired modem through an electrically-conducting line.]

It is therefore submitted that there is no evidentiary basis for the assertion presented in support of the rejection that "it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to adapt wireless LAN modem disclosed by Ikegami into Hirata's system.". Specifically, there is no basis for concluding that it would be obvious, in view of the disclosures of the applied references, to provide a network that includes an outlet that couples a wired segment having a wired modem to a non-wired segment having a non-wired modem. It must be noted, in this connection, that the system disclosed by Ikegami is capable of being connected to other modems **only** via wireless links.

As regards the Examiner's conclusion that a combination of the teachings of the two applied references would make it possible to "improve services," this is one reason why the present invention is patentable! The creation of an improvement that is not suggested by the prior art is clear evidence of patentability. The essential fact is that

neither reference provides any disclosure that would suggest a combination of elements that allows access to a LAN by either non-wired or wired modems.

Since one of the applied references discloses nothing about non-wired modems and the other discloses nothing about wired modems and only discloses arrangements in which non-wired modems can communicate via wireless links, it should be readily apparent that one skilled in the art could not derive from the disclosures of those references any suggestion for the novel network now defined in claim 1 and that any conclusion to the contrary would be based purely on hindsight resulting from an understanding of the disclosure in the present application.

Claim 20, which has been amended to eliminate certain errors noted therein, distinguishes over the applied references in similar respects. This claim is directed to a kit that includes an outlet for coupling to existing wiring and an adapter module that couples the outlet to a non-wired segment, the module including at least one wired modem for transporting signals over the existing wiring and at least one non-wired modem for transporting signals without an electrically-conducting medium.

For reasons already advanced above, and particularly in view of the fact that Hirata contains no disclosure of non-

wired modems and Ikegami contains no disclosure relating to wired modems, it should be readily apparent that one skilled in the art cannot find in these references any suggestion for the novel kit defined in claim 20.

Claim 27 defines an adapter module that distinguishes over the prior art in a manner similar to that discussed above. The claimed module is provided for coupling an outlet to a non-wired segment and includes a wired modem for transporting signals over the existing wiring and a non-wired modem coupled to the wired modem and operative for transporting the signals without an electrically-conducting medium. Since non-wired modem is coupled to the wired modem, a signal exchange coupling exists between the wired modem and the non-wire modem.

For reasons already advance above, one skilled in the art would not derive from any combination of the teachings of the applied references a suggestion for combining a wired modem and a non-wired modem in an adapter for coupling an outlet to a non-wired segment of a network.

Claim 34 distinguishes over the applied references for similar reasons.

Claim 34 has been amended to provide a modified definition of an outlet according to the present invention. The outlet now defined in claim 34 comprises at least one

wired modem adapted to be connected to the existing wiring for transporting signals over the existing wiring and at least one non-wired modem coupled to the wired modem for transporting signals between the non-wired segment and the wired modem.

For reasons already set out above, the combination defined in claim 34 cannot be considered to be suggested by any reasonable combination of the teachings of the applied references.

Claim 37 distinguishes over the applied references by its recitation of a method that equips an outlet with a wired modem, a non-wired modem and an adaptor, such a method not being suggested by any reasonable combination of the teaching of the applied references.

Finally, new claim 38 is directed to an adapter module similar in certain respects to the module defined in claim 27. However, claim 38 specifies that the adapter module comprises means for detachably electrically and mechanically coupling the module to the outlet (support will be found in the specification at page 15, lines 24-27), and at least one non-wired modem operative for transporting signals over the non-wired segment. Thus, the module defined in claim 38 is one that can be connected to or removed from an outlet in order to connect a non-wired modem to at least one wired segment.

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As regards the various dependant claims, they should be considered allowable at least in view of their dependencies from respective ones of the independent claims discussed above.

Accordingly, it is requested that the prior art rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn, that all of the pending claims be allowed and that the application be found in allowable condition.

If the above amendment should not now place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call undersigned counsel to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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